
WARNING!

The views expressed in FMSO publications and reports are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

Problems of Maintaining Defense Security in the Today's World

by General M. A. Gareev (Retired),
President of the Academy of Military Sciences of the Russian Federation,
Translated from the Russian by Dr. Jacob W. Kipp and Robert Love,
Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

This article was previously published in
European Security Autumn 2001
Vol. 10, No., 3

In the modern system of defense security two interrelated problems come clearly into view. On the one hand, political-diplomatic, economic, informational and other non-military means are necessary to resolve antagonisms, prevent conflicts, and provide national defense. On the other hand, when all these capabilities are exhausted, one must be ready to use military force.

The major issues that determine defense security include:

1. The nature of threats to the state and the defense problems arising from them;
2. The focus of military policy and the nature of the organization of defense on a national level;
3. The armed forces and other troops that are needed for the accomplishment of these defense tasks;
4. The nature of possible armed conflicts and the ways in which the armed forces and other troops may be used;
5. The focus of military training and the education of personnel.

1. Threats and Defense Tasks

The potential threats for Russia and the corresponding defense tasks could be formulated in the military doctrine as follows. The first threat is the long-term policy of the leading world powers, the goal of which is to deprive Russia of her independence, to undermine her from within, the terrorism that is connected to this, the fanning of internal and adjacent

conflicts from outside, and what President Putin has called the aspirations of some states for world domination.

The second and greatest threat is that the nuclear weapons of nearly all the countries possessing such weapons may ultimately be designated for use against Russia, and also the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The third threat is the presence of powerful armed groupings along the entire perimeter of Russia's borders, and the fact that these groupings are moving closer to Russia. The eastward expansion of NATO has increased that organization's military potential by 20-25%.

The above threats determine the military actions in which Russia may participate and the defense tasks that she will have to carry out. The first defense tasks would include countermeasures against the political, economic, ideological, psychological, informational, intelligence, counter-intelligence, terrorist and other actions of other states directed at undermining Russia's national security, and, chiefly, her defense security. Thus, the tasks of the appropriate state bodies must be defined. Second, the defense tasks would include strategic nuclear deterrence of a possible nuclear attack and of aggression against Russia. Third is a high-priority readiness to carry out the military tasks that arise in the course of armed conflicts and local wars. Thus, it is necessary to be ready to engage in combat in one or two armed conflicts and one local war simultaneously. Further, mobilization readiness is necessary to counter large-scale aggression and for regional wars, the direct threat of which does not exist today but which at the same time cannot be entirely ruled out.

2. Focus of Military Policy and the Organizing of National Defense

The first of the above-mentioned defense tasks, i.e., providing defense security through non-military means, is currently the weakest link in the system of defense security. Neither the "Law on Security" nor the "Law on Defense" addresses the problems of creating favorable foreign-policy conditions or of building an economic base for defense. Without question Russia needs to avoid confrontation with the West or the East.

Given the currently evolving alignment of forces in the world, the wisest course for Russia is to work steadfastly in the international arena to eliminate confrontational politics, and to achieve whenever possible the adoption of international legal norms forbidding nations to carry out subversive activities against one another. As a part of this process Russia should rely on the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union, and other interested states. In a multi-polar world wherein a threat exists not just for Russia alone, many other interested countries and by public groups could support the struggle for a major improvement in the international relations. Russia should rally all the countries and political forces interested in increasing the role of the United Nations and the OSCE. Certainly China or India have their interests, and they keep an eye on the West. But if such international arbitrariness as in Yugoslavia continues, they will be compelled to unite with

the Russian Federation, as the USA, England and France were compelled to unite with Soviet Union against fascism during the Second World War.

Russia needs to "concentrate" on its own interests and not attach itself rigidly to one of the sides, reserving freedom of maneuver, while firmly but flexibly protecting [its] national interests. In the process of stabilizing conditions around Yugoslavia, it is necessary to intensify cooperation with the USA and European countries to participate in peace actions in the Balkans. But the Partnership-for-Peace program -- and even more so the Founding Act with NATO -- must be reassessed under all circumstances. Contacts and dialogues are necessary if Russia is to have an impact on events and not end up being isolated.

Special attention should go to creating a new system of security cooperation with the CIS countries, particularly with Ukraine and Belarus, as well as such key states as China and India. However, if, contrary to Russia's desires, confrontation cannot be avoided, and economic, informational or other actions are taken against Russia, then well-considered countermeasures should be anticipated. Most important are the following: steady development of the economy; preservation of the country's independence and its scientific and technical potential as the basis of successful resistance in any battle; stability; and the greatest possible unity in society in the name of Russia's paramount national interests.

A Russia that is mired in division and dissension cannot stand in the modern world. To unify the healthy forces within society and to support a reliable political system, one must first define the reasons for the existence of our Fatherland. One such major uniting factor is the idea of a revival of Russia as a great power, not as a regional one, for Russia stretches across several large regions of Eurasia, and is truly great on a global scale. This greatness is not defined simply by someone's desire, not just by nuclear weapons, or by the country's size. It is determined by historical traditions and the real-world needs for the development of the Russian society and state. Either Russia will be a strong, independent and unified state, uniting all peoples, republics, territories and areas in the territory of Eurasia, which is in the interests of all mankind, or she will scatter into pieces, becoming a source of many conflicts. Then the entire international community will be unable to cope with a situation in which Eurasia is brimming with weapons of mass destruction. Either Russia will be a great power, or she will not exist at all. There is no other alternative.

Above all, Russia cannot be allowed to collapse, and threats to her economic and political integrity must be prevented. The country's economic power provides the basis for the country's defense and for equipping its Armed Forces. The condition of the Russian economy is critical. The functioning of national defense requires an allocation of at least 3.5 % of the gross national product. In reality no more than 2.5-2.7 % of the GNP is allocated. Therefore, the Russian state is striving to take more effective measures for the development of the economy and high technology in order to maintain balanced economic opportunities and the necessary level of sufficiency of defense, and also to preserve and further develop the basic nucleus of the defense industry, duly and fully financing the Armed Forces and other troops, creating the necessary industrial and mobilization capacities of an industry that produces weapons, military and special hardware and property.

At the same time, today special significance is attached to achieving the greatest possible efficiency in defense, and a more strict, consistent and thorough accounting of military-economic and operational-strategic considerations. All this points up new requirements for planning weapons and outfitting the Armed Forces and other troops.

Considering the real economic conditions and the political-military situation, over the next four to five years Russia will have to focus on meeting the challenges of creating the scientific-technical and technological stocks needed to re-equip the army and navy.

Further, an analysis of the potential threats to Russian national interests reveals the need to plan and implement coordinated efforts in political-diplomatic, economic, information, technological, psychological and other spheres. Russia's Security Council should coordinate all actions and measures taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, bodies dealing with foreign economic ties, intelligence and counter-intelligence organs, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Federal Border Guards and other agencies.

The political-military principles of the military doctrine should define the tasks and functions of various state bodies for the prevention of threats to Russian Federation national security in all the spheres of activity mentioned above. The following are also needed: systemic scientific study of the problems of confrontation using non-military means; the preparation of the appropriate cadres of broad competence; and the practical mastery of all forms of struggle.

The new nature of threats to Russia's national interests and security, as well as the great number of diverse tasks to be carried out under these conditions, demand the appropriate organization of a political-military and strategic leadership. In the interests of national defense, in order to achieve the fullest possible mobilization and most effective use of all available forces and assets, and to centralize the management of all state bodies and departments, it is expedient to provide for the wartime creation of a State Committee on Defense, headed by the President of the Russian Federation, based on the Security Council.

In wartime, for the strategic leadership of the Armed Forces and other troops involved in national defense, it is necessary to create a *Stavka* of High Command with the major role reserved for the General Staff, whose responsibilities must be increased considerably. The General Staff should not be defined as a "working body." The General Staff is the basic strategic leadership body of the Armed Forces. The Committee of Chiefs of Staffs, headed by the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, can serve as the military-staff body coordinating the force structuring, training, manning, use and comprehensive support of the Armed Forces and other troops.

While the country is in a state of peace, it is desirable to create a unified command and control of all forces and means employed for defense both in the center and in the localities. Thus, it is necessary to establish the clearly defined borders of the military districts and the districts of the Internal Troops, Border Guard, and other troops. In matters of territorial defense all troops and armed formations should be operationally subordinate to the commanders of military districts.

3. What Armed Forces and other Troops Are Needed to Resolve the Defense Tasks Outlined Above?

According to the statements of the President of the Russian Federation and the Defense Minister (Krasnaya zvezda, 23 Nov 00), improvements will be made in the military force structure as follows. It is expedient that Russia have a mobile Armed Forces that is relatively small in number and capable of accomplishing the defense tasks discussed above.

Current political-military conditions make possible -- and the country's economic situation demands -- the maximum feasible reduction of the Armed Forces and other power structures. At the same time, they must be transformed to give them a new shape appropriate to the nature of the new Russian society and the state, as well as to raise the qualitative parameters of their combat capability and combat readiness.

In order to reach this goal in the next 10-15 years, the reform of the Armed Forces and other troops will be carried out in accordance with a nationwide program of military reform. The basic focus of the reform is the maximum professionalization of the Armed Forces and other troops, and, as material resources are accumulated, a transition to their manning chiefly through a contract system. It is necessary to improve continually the organizational and branch structure of the Armed Forces, recognizing that all branches of the Armed Forces and service arms should be ready to carry out major strategic tasks through joint efforts, mutually complementing each other. Therefore, the basic focus of the force structure of the Armed Forces will be on the greatest possible integration of the branches of the Armed Forces and their command-and-control systems. This means a transition to three branches of Armed Forces [VS]: the Ground Forces; the Air Forces [VVS]; and the Navy [VMF]. In this connection the transformation of the Missile Forces of Strategic Designation [RVSN] and the unification of air defense and air forces are quite justified.

The President of the Russian Federation and the Minister of Defense have once more confirmed the numbers reported earlier: in the next three to four years the personnel strength of the Army and Navy will be reduced by 365,000 military personnel and 120,000 thousand civilian experts. However, this does not imply that the present stage of reform will involve simply manpower cuts, as occurred in the past. Our goal is to build a new army, not to preserve the old one.

The financial resources for this purpose do exist. For the first time in recent memory the level of funding for the Armed Forces is defined for each year and each category for the next decade, which will allow precise and concrete planning of state defense orders. The Armed Forces force-structure plan for the period 2001-2005 has now been completed. It represents a series of more than 30 interconnected documents and will soon be signed by the President, as will the state program of arms acquisition for the period extending until 2010.

One crucial point: by no means will the reduction of the Army and Navy impact negatively on the qualitative conditions of units of constant readiness, including the Southwest

force grouping (formed on the basis of the North Caucasus Military District [SKVO]), and the Central-Asian force grouping (formed on the basis of the Volga Military District [PriVO] and the Ural Military District [UrVO]), with both of the foregoing to be created by 2006. The main goal of these formations is to make possible the localization of armed conflict in the respective strategic directions. Because there are currently six such directions but seven military districts, the possibility of the unification in the near future of the PriVO and the UrVO is not ruled out.

The most important structural change will be the Armed Forces' transition to three branches: the Ground Forces (the *Glavkomat*, or High Command, will be restored), Air Forces and Navy – according to the principle of the "three elements." This transition is to be complete by 2005. Simultaneously, in addition to the currently existing Airborne Forces [VDV], two combat arms of the Armed Forces will be added. These will be the Missile Forces of Strategic Designation [RVSN], and a third combat arm of the Armed Forces, which will be created by merging the Space Forces and the Missile Defense Forces. The latter arm remains unnamed, but two options are proposed: the Space Forces or the Space-Missile Forces.

And as a whole the composition, combat capability and combat readiness of troop groupings in the major strategic directions should support the execution of tasks in local conflicts, generally using the forces of one military district, one Border Troop district and a district of the Internal Troops, with the specific participation of forces and assets of other branches of the Armed Forces (the Navy - in a coastal direction, air forces, air defense forces, and other troops).

For the execution of military tasks in local wars of a regional scale the commitment of forces of several military districts, arranged in a given strategic direction, and other troops, may be required along with the involvement of space assets, air forces, air defense forces, the Navy, the [VDV] Airborne Forces, and other special troops, and in some cases also strategic reserves from other directions and from the country's interior, as well the partial mobilization of additional units and formations.

In the event of large-scale aggression we must be ready to involve the Armed forces and other troops in their full complement, drawing upon forces and means from all directions and mobilizing additional formations. Most of such a war will be conducted through the efforts of the entire nation with the mobilization of all available economic capabilities, human and other resources, and subordinating all available forces and means to the interests of protecting the Fatherland. A professional army can suffice for no more than one week of such a war. In 1991, even during the small local conflict in the Persian Gulf region, the USA mobilized 200,000 reservists, and they have called more than 30,000 reservists to conduct the war in Yugoslavia. This is an especially important consideration for Russia with her large number of defense tasks.

4. The Possible Nature of War and How the Armed Forces May Be Used

In principle, the forces should be ready to attack and to defend themselves. However, it does not follow that the aggressor can be easily denied his goals. Once military actions begin, it

is naive to expect that we can persuade the opponent to abandon them. There will certainly be elements of a strategy of "indirect actions." But on the whole, if there is an armed battle, both the troops and the people should be determined to fight to achieve the complete defeat of the opponent or attain a favorable peace.

One of the key and most difficult tasks is the use of nuclear weapons. It is well known that the USSR and the Warsaw Treaty Organization emphasized the following: we shall not engage in first-use of nuclear weapons, although NATO's military doctrine stated that NATO might use such weapons first. In our current military doctrine there is no direct statement that Russia might engage in the first-use of nuclear weapons, but, at the same time, its contents implies that such can take place. Now some political figures expressly offer to put in writing that Russia might launch a nuclear first-strike. There is a certain rationale for this. In reality, for a weakened Russia, nuclear weapons remain the sole reliable means of strategic deterrence. Moreover, with the further reduction of nuclear forces it will become increasingly difficult to rely on the effective delivery of a retaliatory strike and -- even more so -- on a retaliatory launch-on-warning strike [otvetno-vstrechnyy udar].*

At the same time it is not difficult to imagine that, under difficult military conditions, the sides' efforts not to be late and to be the first to deliver a strike will constantly militate for the use of nuclear weapons and could have catastrophic consequences. If the defensive nature of the military doctrine means that we will not be the first to begin a war, then how can we say that we may use nuclear weapons first?

The presidents of the USA and Russia have agreed on the de-targeting of missiles and on additional nuclear-safety measures. Will we suddenly, under these conditions, declare that we shall be the first to launch a nuclear strike? Here the idea emerges that the time has come to negotiate an agreement with the USA and NATO, not only on issues of a quantitative reduction of armaments but also to coordinate military doctrines. In 1983 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Resolution No. 38/75 which condemns the development, advancement, distribution and propagation of political and military doctrines and concepts that seek to endorse the "legitimacy" of the first-use of nuclear weapons. It is possible that NATO members will heed this as they clarify their strategy.

In the new military doctrine, Russia's position on the question of nuclear weapons probably should not be subjected to rigid formulations. The essence of our position is that Russia's military doctrine proceeds from the necessity of preserving the nuclear potential within the limits established by international treaties and viewing nuclear weapons as the most reliable means of sustaining military security. The Russian Federation has stated its determination to carry out limited or half-scale use of nuclear weapons with the purpose of frustrating or rebuffing aggression directed against it. In the event of open aggression against Russia and serious threats to her security, Russia may find it necessary to use nuclear weapons against an aggressor.

We can agree that it is now unrealistic for us to aspire to strategic parity. However, we are in a position to inflict unacceptable damage on an opponent. Proposals are sometimes put forward that refer to "assigned" or "required" damage, rather than "unacceptable" damage. But one can speak of assigned or required damage only in the case of first-use of nuclear weapons. If

a retaliatory strike is delivered, then “setting” or “assigning” something beforehand is rendered practically impossible.

Characteristic in modern armed conflict is a significant increase in the role and value of so-called "indirect" strategic actions. Supporting this will be nuclear deterrence, efforts to spare professional armies, and the refusal of leading powers to provide direct support to opposing sides in conflicts.

Indirect actions may manifest themselves primarily in political efforts to prevent war and military conflicts. At this stage, in addition to political measures, all of the following can play a significant role: the economic sanctions recently so widely used; sea, air and ground blockades of means of communication; shows of force; allocation of peacekeeping contingents for separating the sides; and other means of action.

When none of these measures yield positive results, and a military conflict becomes unavoidable, the element of surprise acquires central significance and is achieved through careful concealment of the primary means of action, combined with a disinformation campaign against the enemy. Active military operations of the ground forces could be preceded by massive air and naval strikes with the objective of delivering fire strikes and breaking the enemy's will to resist. After or during the execution of fire strikes, an ultimatum can be delivered to the enemy about surrender, or specific compromise conditions for conflict resolution can be offered. It can be expedient for the basic groupings of ground forces to enter into battle after the opponent's reliable destruction by fire.

Special methods of warfare will occupy a special place in the system of indirect actions, ranging from psychological operations and subversive activities to special-forces operations. A multi-path information confrontation will permeate the entire armed struggle. The primary tasks relating to the defeat of the opponent will be executed by means of long-range fire destruction, and not during contact of forward units. In the war in Yugoslavia, we saw the application of NATO's so-called no-contact air operations, where strikes were launched without entering the air defense's kill zone. All combat and battles acquire a dispersed, volumetric nature, covering all spheres of military actions on the front, in the rear and in the air. On the whole, operations and combat actions will develop rapidly, without the existence of continuous fronts, or only during their temporary stabilization, and will be highly maneuverable in nature.

Operations in the future will not be limited to aerospace operations. Ground Forces in cooperation with the Air Forces [VVS] and the Navy [VMF] will retain their significance, especially for Russia, and will conduct both offensive and defensive operations.

The rapid development of advanced technologies will increase the military-technical gap between the leading states and other countries.

Even though there were many flaws in the actions of the NATO forces against Yugoslavia, such as the bombing of civilian instead of military objectives, and even the attacking of Macedonia or Bulgaria rather than Serbia, on the whole from the standpoint of military-technological results, the actions of the NATO forces were quite impressive. With minimal

losses and great effectiveness they struck the majority of their planned targets, employing aircraft and missiles that appeared invulnerable to old-generation aircraft and air defense weapons.

The American Army and other NATO armies displayed great superiority in intelligence, communications, electronic warfare [REB], navigation and target acquisition, automation and other command-and-control systems, information warfare and, on the whole, in precision weapons. Although it is a sad and bitter truth, one must recognize that because of the decline of her defense industry, for the first time in Russia's entire history, if war were imposed on her, Russia would have to fight with weapons qualitatively inferior to those of an opponent in a number of parameters, especially in means of communication, intelligence, electronic warfare [REB], and precision weapons. This was not the case during the Great Patriotic War or in the post-war years. Some military theorists believe that overwhelming technological superiority of one side over the other will be the characteristic feature of future wars. However, such a tendency is not fatally inevitable; it can be countered. In this connection due attention must be given to the state of the defense industry, with decisive concentration on efforts to create a modern micro-element base, as was done in 1940s for the creation of the nuclear-missile weapons. On the other hand, military-technical, strategic, operational and tactical means and methods must be sought in order to counter the latest technologies of other armies as ways of neutralizing their advantage.

First and foremost one must appreciate, but not unduly absolutize or make a fetish of, new technologies and precision weapons.

The opponent strives to conduct a so-called "no contact war," destroying objectives from afar, not entering the air-defense kill zones. But one can deprive the enemy of such opportunity if one goes over to the offensive, conducts air assault landings in the enemy's rear, and seizes or fires on airfields. We recall how Soviet aircraft in 1941, despite huge losses, contrived to bomb Berlin.

Anywhere and everywhere it is necessary to impose contact actions and ground combat upon the opponent. Under these conditions operational-maneuver groups which once so frightened NATO forces, would be very effective.

5. Focus of Military Training and the Education of Cadres

Strengthening the country's defense capability requires the active moral and political support of society, a general increase in the prestige of military service, and the education of citizens and service personnel in the spirit of patriotic devotion to the homeland.

A reassessment is needed of the entire structure of military life and the organization of military service, of combat and combined-arms regulations, as well as a number of other basic documents, in order to further professionalize the Armed Forces, and also to democratize them while at the same time strengthening discipline, military order and the legal basis of unity of command.

Substantial improvement is needed in the system of military education -- an increase in the level of general educational training at military institutions of higher learning and in the cultural and overall education level of officers. Leading civilian institutions of higher learning should play a greater role in the training of experts for the Armed Forces, particularly in the technical fields.

* This is a meeting exchange of nuclear weapons. --Trans.